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OPENING STATEMENT BY THE HONORABLE
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AND COORDINATOR FOR COMBATTING TERRORISM
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BEFORE THE SENATE INTERNAL SECURITY SUBCOMMITTEE

MAY 14, 1975

It is a privilege, Mr. Chairman, to meet with this Committee, particularly since I am included in the same hearing with our distinguished visitor from abroad, Brian Crozier. His name is of course well known to me and the fact that he is appearing today spurred me to reacquaint myself with his excellent writings.

I believe this is the first time that my office has been represented before this Committee, so a brief description of my functions may be in order. I wear two hats. As Special Assistant to the Secretary of State, I am Coordinator for Combatting Terrorism as it may affect our Department of State activity and responsibilities in foreign affairs throughout the world. My other capacity is as Chairman of the Working Group under the Cabinet Committee for Combatting Terrorism. In both capacities, I am essentially a coordinator.

I am accompanied by my Deputy, Mr. John N. Gatch, who is a Foreign Service Officer with extensive experience in the Middle East. His two most recent assignments abroad were as Deputy Chief of Mission in Kuwait from 1964 to 1968

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and as Charge d'Affaires of our Embassy in Manama, Bahrain from 1971 to 1973. He joined this office shortly after it was established and worked with my two distinguished predecessors, Ambassador Armin Meyer and Ambassador Lewis Hoffacker.

I am also a Foreign Service Officer with varied service abroad, most recently in the Far East where I had two Presidential appointments -- one as Political Adviser to the Commander-in-Chief Pacific and the other as Civil Administrator of the Ryukyu Islands, or Okinawa. My immediately preceding assignment was as Chairman of the Department of International Relations and Area Studies at the National War College here in Washington.

First a word about the formal structure of our interagency activity to combat terrorism. This structure was established in September, 1972, when the President asked the Secretary of State to chair a Cabinet Committee to consider, in the President's words, "the most effective means to prevent terrorism here and abroad." The President took this action following the tragedy at the Munich Olympics, a tragedy which illustrated dramatically that international terrorism had reached the point where innocent people anywhere can be victimized. This incident and others throughout the world bear witness to the terrible potential of a disturbed or

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determined person or group to terrorize the international community. This capability to disrupt society has expanded with the increasing technological and economic complexity of our society and with the added incentive of wide and rapid publicity.

The Cabinet Committee* does not meet on a regular basis, only as the situation may demand. The Working Group, composed of senior representatives of Department or Agency heads, is in constant contact as issues arise and incidents occur and meets on a bi-weekly basis. Over the past two years and eight months, this interagency effort has been extremely active. It has, I believe, made us as a Government more effective in responding to the continuing threat from a variety of organizations and individuals seeking to strike at us at home and abroad. This is not to say that we have solved all the problems facing us. But we are using Government-wide resources to better advantage and have at least reduced the risk to our people and to our foreign guests.

The Cabinet Committee/Working Group has, as a matter of practice, concentrated on protection of Americans abroad and of foreigners, particularly internationally protected persons,

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* Cabinet Committee: Secretary of State (Chairman); Secretaries of Treasury, Defense, and Transportation; the Attorney General; the US Ambassador to the UN; the Director of the FBI; the Director of Central Intelligence; and the President's Assistants for National Security and Domestic Affairs

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in this country. For Americans at home, there are the customary agencies, local and federal, which continue with their traditional responsibilities. Since the terrorism which concerns our Government-wide anti-terrorism structure is of international scope, threatening to strike within our borders, the FBI is invaluable in keeping the Cabinet Committee/Working Group apprised of international potentialities or implications in domestic situations. Here again, the Cabinet Committee/Working Group is a useful instrument to surveil the global terrorist picture, to ensure effective collaboration among agencies and departments with domestic and foreign responsibilities, and to recommend counter-measures to close gaps in the security screen around individuals whom we protect. For example, we monitor the implementation of Public Law 92-539, which confers federal jurisdiction in protection of foreign officials and official guests. If in the light of experience, there is room for improvement in the dove-tailing of local and federal protection in this regard, modification of practice or legislation would be a matter of concern to the Cabinet Committee/Working Group.

While our official personnel abroad have been frequent targets for a wide variety of terrorists, we are mindful that our mandate covers all Americans. American businessmen have been

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particular targets in Latin America and have therefore received our special attention. There have been so many requests for advice from companies with overseas interests that the Department of State prepared a brochure containing general security tips for such businessmen. This brochure is not for general distribution, for obvious security reasons, but I am pleased to supply copies for the use of the Committee. When briefing American businessmen on dangers they may face abroad, we emphasize the importance of continuing contact with our embassy or consulate in the area of assignment. The full resources of the US Government, including information, official contacts with the host government, and our expertise in counter-terrorism, are at the disposal of American businessmen or other non-officials abroad. While the foreign government has the primary responsibility for protection of foreigners within its territory, the US Government complements that protection in such matters as the protection of our official establishments. We may not always agree with the company or individual concerned on tactics, such as the advisability of paying ransom. But it is important that we stick together in tight situations such as Argentina, where despite the efforts of the Argentine Government terrorists have kidnapped a number of American businessmen for very high ransons.

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We conscientiously emphasize the preventive aspect of our mandate. Therefore, our main efforts are in the field of improving procedures in this country and abroad to detect and deter terrorists. We have been in the forefront of those who have sought tightened international air security. We continue to press for additional ratifications of three important multilateral conventions dealing with hijacking: the 1963 Tokyo Convention, which in effect requires countries to return a hijacked plane, passengers and crew; the 1970 Hague Convention, which requires countries either to extradite or prosecute skyjackers; and the 1971 Montreal Convention, which proscribes any kind of sabotage of aviation, including destruction of aircraft on the ground, and requires prosecution or extradition of the offenders. At Rome in September of 1973 we were unsuccessful in our efforts to develop an international consensus to put enforcement teeth in these conventions. Nevertheless, we are encouraged by continued, admittedly slow, progress elsewhere in the ICAO forum, including adoption of a Security Annex by the ICAO Council to further improve security of airports abroad.

At the UN in 1972 we sought to prohibit the export of violence to innocent persons who are many countries, sometimes continents, removed from the scene of a conflict. This approach became bogged down in debate over so-called

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justifiable, as opposed to illegal, violence. We accordingly narrowed our proposals to more specific categories of offenses which, because of their grave and inhuman effect on innocent individuals, or because of their serious interference with the vital machinery of international life, should be condemned by states of every ideology and alignment. Under this narrowed approach we supported in the 1973 General Assembly a convention for the protection of diplomats. The Assembly agreed to this measure, which requires that persons who attack or kidnap diplomats of foreign governments or international organizations be extradited or prosecuted.

In INTERPOL, in the Organization of American States, and in other appropriate forums, we achieve what is feasible in the way of multilateral discouragement of international terrorists. Simultaneously, we maintain quiet liaison with individual governments which share our abhorrence of terrorism. We are pleased, for example, to assist others when they suffer hijackings, by providing communications and other services even though the affected plane may not be over or in our country.

When in spite of all our efforts an act of terrorism occurs, we are prepared to deal with it swiftly and effectively. Within the Department of State, task forces can be

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assembled on short notice to manage critical events. Such task forces are composed of selected specialists who can call on the full resources of the US Government to rescue, or at least to monitor, the beleaguered parties. With the advice and concurrence of the Working Group, our office has prepared detailed operating procedures for handling terrorist incidents involving Americans abroad and involving foreign officials in this country. These documents are of course classified, but I would be pleased to discuss generally their contents with this Committee.

Tactics vary in each crisis situation, but one consistent factor should be understood by all parties concerned: the US Government will not pay ransom to kidnappers, nor will it release prisoners to satisfy blackmail demands. We advise other governments, individuals, and companies to adopt similar positions because we believe to do otherwise would multiply terrorist attacks. But I hasten to underline the importance which we attach to human life. We do not glibly sacrifice hostages for the sake of this firm policy. We believe that firmness, if applied with the best diplomacy we can muster, can save lives in the long run and probably in the short run as well.

The Foreign Service has had more than a few terrorist experiences in the past ten years: 61 of our officials

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abroad were subjected to terrorist attack during that period, including 28 who were kidnapped. 15 of these individuals were murdered. We have learned to take reasonable precautions. But we do not want our embassies and consulates to be fortresses or armed camps. We use ingenuity to reduce risks. Very importantly, we remind the host government of its special responsibility to protect diplomatic and consular personnel, and of its general duty to protect all foreigners in its territory.

Sometimes, however, that foreign protection must be reinforced. The State Department's Office of Security is responsible for ensuring that our Foreign Service posts are doing their best, with necessary equipment, to supplement such local protection as may be available. After the tragic murder of our diplomats and a Belgian colleague in Khartoum in March of 1973, we concluded that this effort should be strengthened. The Congress was requested to provide supplemental funds, and all of us in the Foreign Service are most grateful for the $19.6 million which was made available. The Office of Security is managing the disbursement of these funds, based on highest priority needs of our posts throughout the world.

The US has attempted to show leadership in stimulating global attention to the apparently growing international

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terrorist threat. We have not achieved all we sought in international cooperation. But our multilateral, bilateral, and unilateral efforts must and will continue with all possible drive and persuasiveness. There seems to be increased collaboration among terrorist groups of different nationalities. Such groups seem to be moving farther and farther afield, including toward North America. There is evidence of ample financial sources for some terrorist groups, not only from ransoms collected but also from governments which, for one reason or another, are sympathetic toward certain groups. And, last but not least, there seems to be no shortage of political-economic-social frustrations to spawn terrorists on all continents. The global terrorist epidemic threatens the very fabric of international order.

I would like to conclude this statement with, first, a very brief assessment of trends in international terrorism over the past year, and then with a broad look at what the future may hold.

As for the recent trends in terrorism, these have been mixed.

On the favorable side, the relatively moderate, pro-peaceful settlement members of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) leadership, supported by key Arab governments, have brought about a significant reduction in Arab

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terrorism against non-Israeli targets. Arab governments have one after the other closed their airports to hijackers and other terrorists seeking safe haven after attacks against non-Israeli targets. Even the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), which conducted so many of the dramatic hijacking, massacre and barricade/hostage incidents of the 1970-73 period, appears to have at least temporarily abandoned these tactics. There has been a world-wide trend of nations no longer being willing to provide safe haven to known terrorists or otherwise openly support terrorist activities.

On the negative side, however, there has been no diminution of terrorist violence against Israel and in most countries that have domestic terrorism problems, such as Argentina, Nicaragua, Northern Ireland, Mexico, Spain and Germany. Some of the more sensational incidents have been by the Baader-Meinhof gang in Germany, in pursuit of its anarchist, anti-establishment objectives and the release of imprisoned comrades. You will recall the recent Lorenz kidnapping in Berlin and the subsequent seizure of the German Embassy in Stockholm. The Japanese Red Army, with objectives similar to those of the Baader-Meinhof gang plus a world revolution theme, has been active, initiating incidents abroad on its own as well as in collaboration with the PFLP. Cooperation

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among terrorist groups has strengthened, particularly the PFLP with the Japanese Red Army, the Baader-Meinhof group and the IRA.

What of the future? Brian Jenkins of the RAND Corporation recently wrote a provocative article which will be reflected in my effort to respond to that question.

Up to now the toll of terrorism in dead, wounded and property damage has been relatively small -- notwithstanding all I have said about terrorism's political impact and importance. This is true of all forms of terrorism compared with the casualties and property losses of even the most limited conventional wars. But it is particularly true of international terrorism. Only a little over 500 people were killed, including terrorists, and some 800 injured, in all international terrorist incidents from 1968 through 1974. This is less than the homicide rate of a single major American city.

In the years ahead this may change. New weapons are constantly enlarging terrorists' destructive capabilities. Particularly rapid advances are being made in individual weapons development. With the benefit of miniaturization, a new range of small, portable, easy to operate, highly accurate and highly destructive weapons are coming into existence. Such weapons, if they should become available to terrorists, could be

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employed as effectively against civil aircraft, supertankers, motorcades and speakers podiums as against military targets. The Soviet SA-7 heat-seeking, man-portable missile, the equivalent of our REDEYE, has already been found in the hands of terrorists, fortunately before it could be used.

And of course there are even more serious hazards. As nuclear power facilities proliferate, the quantity and geographical dispersion of plutonium and other fissionable materials in the world will increase greatly. The possibility of plausible nuclear terrorist threats based on illicitly constructed atomic bombs, stolen nuclear weapons or sabotage of nuclear power installations can be expected to grow. Even more plausible will be threats based on more readily and economically produced chemical and biological materials, such as nerve gas and germ concentrates.

Would terrorists actually use such weapons? Probably not. They could already have contaminated water supplies, killing thousands, but have not done so. There are practical arguments against mass murder, which would not necessarily promote the terrorist's objectives and could provoke a damaging backlash. But the possibility of plausible nuclear, CW and BW threats is real. And though the chances of such threats being carried out are small, the risk will be there and will have to be met.

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There is a further danger. Conventional war is becoming increasingly impractical. It is too destructive, it is too expensive, and it usually requires big-power backers which, fearing direct involvement, tend to force a quick ceasefire, before the attacker's purposes can be fully achieved. To avoid these disadvantages, a nation could employ terrorist groups in surrogate warfare against another nation. A government could subsidize an existing terrorist group, or create one of its own, to disrupt, alarm and subvert a target country. Only a small investment of men and material would be required, far less than for a conventional attack; the venture would be deniable; and the results achieved in the target state might be fully as effective as through a military action.

We are in an era in which people are increasingly unwilling to accept authority, and increasing willing to challenge authority. The atmosphere is similar to the period from 1775 to the mid-Nineteenth century. That era too was marked by widespread revolution in Europe and the Americas directed against existing political and social institutions. Like the last two decades, it saw the dissolution of several empires and the creation of many new states.

But there are important differences between that period and the one on which we now seem to be embarking. One such

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difference, just noted and most welcome, is the reduced prospect of open warfare, with its high casualties. But another is a prospect of a high level of internal insecurity and political violence by dissatisfied groups using, or threatening to use, against our vulnerable modern societies, the frightening small, or mass effect weapons, I have cited. A world of many Ulsters, plus threatened nuclear, chemical or biological terrorist attacks, could be statistically safer for the average man than the world of 150 years ago or, particularly, the world of repeated major conflicts of the past 60 years. But it seems likely also to be a more nerve-wracking and unsettled world or continuing low level violence and threatened mass weapons terrorist attack.

In conclusion, modern terrorism obviously presents complex and serious problems. There are no easy answers. If there is a Middle East settlement the aspects of the problem originating there may diminish. But in various forms not now clear terrorism seems likely to be a growing problem for the world and for the US. It could become an extremely frightening problem with radiological, biological and chemical weapons in the hands of international terrorists convinced that the highest morality is the advancement of their cause and quite prepared to die for that cause. A

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broad international consensus on the seriousness of the problem, and on the necessity for effective action in such matters as the safeguarding of fissionable materials, is essential. We do not want such effective international action to come as a result of some terrible shocks. Our Government is pursuing its efforts, with all the energy and imagination it can muster, both to combat the existing terrorist threat and to avert worse dangers that may lie ahead.

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